

Message Text

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ACTION SNM-05

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OES-07 OMB-01 HEW-04 DODE-00 SS-15 AID-05 AGRE-00
H-01 L-03 /083 W
-----036248 022033Z /43

P 021949Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6716
INFO ALL USCONS MEXICO POUCH

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E.O. 11652:N/A
TAGS: SNAR,MX
SUBJECT: NARCOTICS OVERVIEW - FY 1979 CONGRESSIONAL
PRESENTATION

REF: STATE 271842

1. THE PROBLEM: MEXICO IS A MAJOR PRODUCER OF OPIUM, HEROIN, AND MARIJUANA. IT IS A SIGNIFICANT TRANSIT COUNTRY FOR COCAINE AND, ACCORDING TO RECENT INTELLIGENCE, IS INCREASINGLY USED AS A TRANSIT POINT FOR HEROIN PRODUCED IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. INFORMATION ON MEXICO AS A SOURCE OF SUPPLY OF AMPHETAMINES AND BARBITUARATES IS SKETCHY BUT SUFFICIENT TO SUGGEST THAT SIGNIFICANT AMOUNTS OF THESE DRUGS AVAILABLE IN THE UNITED STATES MAY ORIGINATE IN OR TRANSIT MEXICO.

2. U.S. INTEREST: BECAUSE OF MEXICO'S PROXIMITY TO THE
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UNITED STATES AND THE LARGE VOLUME OF CONTRABAND OF ALL TYPES THAT CROSSES THE MEXICAN-US BORDER IN BOTH DIRECTIONS, ANY MEANINGFUL EFFORT AT DRUG CONTROL IN THE UNITED STATES MUST BE SUPPORTED BY PARALLEL EFFORTS IN MEXICO.

3. STRATEGY: (EMBASSY ACCEPTS STATEMENT OF STRATEGY IN
PARA TWO OF REFTEL AS ACCURATE STATEMENT OF OUR NARCOTICS

CONTROL STRATEGY IN MEXICO.)¹³

4. PROGRESS TO DATE: DURING PAST YEAR, MEXICO HAS MADE MAJOR PROGRESS IN ERADICATING ILLICIT CROPS IN THE FIELD AND IN INCREASING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ITS INTERDICTION EFFORT. NARCOTICS INTELLIGENCE COORDINATION IS PROGRESSING SLOWER THAN WE HAD HOPED BUT BETTER THAN MANY HAD PREDICTED. INTERMINISTERIAL COORDINATION, PARTICULARLY BETWEEN THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE AND THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE, FLOURISHES AS NEVER BEFORE. FOR MOST RECENT STATISTICS ON PROGRAM RESULTS SEE MEXICO 18938.

5. NARCOTICS PRODUCTION: OPIUM POPPY AND MARIJUANA CONTINUE TO BE CULTIVATED PRIMARILY IN THE WESTERN SIERRA MADRES. THE PRESSURE OF PAST ERADICATION CAMPAIGNS SEEMS TO HAVE RESULTED IN: (A) SMALLER PLOTS, SOMETIMES AS SMALL AS ONE-EIGHTH ACRE, MORE WIDELY DISPERSED THAN PREVIOUSLY; (B) ABANDONMENT OF ILLICIT CULTIVATION IN SOME TRADITIONAL GROWING AREAS; AND (C) INITIATION OF CULTIVATION IN AREAS WHERE POPPY AND MARIJUANA HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY BEEN DETECTED. THE LONGER WE WORK ON THIS PROBLEM IN MEXICO, THE MORE WE REALIZE THAT THERE IS NO DEFINITE "CROP YEAR" AND THAT, WITH ONLY MINOR EXCEPTIONS, OPIUM AND MARIJUANA CAN BE GROWN YEAR-AROUND. THERE ARE, AS YET, NO INFORMED ESTIMATES OF THE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN GROWING ILLICIT CROPS OR OF THE INCOME THEY DERIVE FROM LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THIS ACTIVITY.

6. PROCESSING: OPIUM GUM HAS BEEN REFINED INTO HEROIN IN REMOTE GROWING AREAS AND HAS ALSO BEEN MOVED TO MAJOR REFINING CENTERS SUCH AS CULIACAN, SINALOA. TO OUR KNOWLEDGE THE ONLY OPIATE EXPORTED TO THE UNITED STATES IS HEROIN. MARIJUANA, BECAUSE OF ITS BULK, IS GENERALLY PACKED AND SOLD TO TRAFFICKERS AT THE GROWING SITE. THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS OF "HASHISH" PRODUCTION, BUT IT HAS USUALLY TURNED OUT TO BE POWDERED MARIJUANA. HASHISH OIL IS ALSO INFREQUENTLY ENCOUNTERED.

7. MARKETING/TRAFFICKING: LOCALLY-PRODUCED HEROIN, COCAINE IMPORTED FROM SOUTH AMERICA, AND, INCREASINGLY, HEROIN IMPORTED FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA, CONTINUE TO BE MARKETING BY RELATIVELY SMALL, TIGHTLY KNIT FAMILIES WITH CLOSE RELATIVES IN THE UNITED STATES. HEROIN AND COCAINE SEEM TO MOVE PRIMARILY BY LAND, WHILE LARGE SHIPMENTS OF MARIJUANA CONTINUE BY AIR AND SEA. AS "HOMEGROWN" NARCOTICS BECOME MORE SCARCE BECAUSE OF THE ERADICATION PROGRAM, WE ANTICIPATE THAT MEXICAN TRAFFICKERS WILL RELY MORE HEAVILY ON DRUGS IMPORTED FROM OTHER AREAS, MAKING

MEXICO MORE OF A TRANSIT COUNTRY AND LESS OF A SOURCE COUNTRY.

8. LOCAL DRUG ABUSE: DOMESTIC HEROIN ABUSE SEEMS TO BE CONCENTRATED IN PRODUCTION AREAS SUCH AS CULIACAN AND IN CITIES ON OR NEAR THE U.S. BORDER. MARIJUANA ABUSE IS COMMON AND WIDESPREAD THROUGHOUT MEXICO, AND WE BELIEVE COCAINE ABUSE TO BE CONCENTRATED IN MAJOR URBAN AREAS WHERE THERE ARE SUFFICIENT AFFLUENT MEXICANS TO PAY THE HIGH COST OF THIS DRUG. ACCORDING TO THE CENTRO MEXICANO DE ESTUDIOS EN FARMACODEPENDENCIA (CEMEF), THE APPROXIMATE MEXICAN EQUIVALENT TO THE U.S. NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON DRUG ABUSE (NIDA), THE ABUSE OF INHALENTS, AMPHETAMINES, AND BARBITUARATES IS WIDESPREAD AND MORE SERIOUS THAN THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ABUSE OF HEROIN OR COCAINE.

9. ATTITUDES: GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, PRIMARILY THE

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INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 DEAE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 IO-13
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ATTORNEY GENERAL AND THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, ARE WELL

AWARE OF THE DRUG PROBLEM, AS IS THE GENERAL PUBLIC IN PRODUCING AREAS AND ALONG THE BORDER, WHERE MEXICAN NEWS MEDIA REGULARLY GIVE PROMINENT COVERAGE TO GOM LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES. OTHERWISE, WE WOULD RATE DRUG ABUSE AWARENESS GENERALLY LOW.

10. COMMITMENT: WE SENSE AN UNUSUAL DEDICATION TO NARCOTICS CONTROL FROM THE HIGHEST TO THE WORKING LEVELS. EMBASSY OFFICERS HAVE SEEN PRESIDENTIAL DIRECTIVES TO TREASURY ORDERING IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDS REQUESTED BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL AND THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE. ASSISTANCE AGREEMENTS GIVING THE EMBASSY UNPRECEDENTED "RIGHT OF REVIEW" OF GOM ACTIONS ARE NEGOTIATED WITH MINIMUM DIFFICULTY. ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE, WHICH IS EQUIVALENT TO U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND HAS SIMILAR SCOPE OF DUTIES, CURRENTLY HAS 482 EMPLOYEES (WELL OVER TEN PERCENT OF ITS WORKFORCE) DEVOTED EXCLUSIVELY TO THE NARCOTICS PROGRAM. THE MEXICAN ARMY CURRENTLY HAS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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10,360 TROOPS (AGAIN, WELL OVER TEN PERCENT OF TOTAL ARMY STRENGTH) DEVOTED TO ANTI-NARCOTICS ACTIVITIES. WHILE WE HAVE NO RELIABLE ESTIMATE OF MONETARY COSTS OF THIS EFFORT, WE DO KNOW THAT IT IS SIGNIFICANT. ON THE ENFORCEMENT SIDE, ONLY 195 OF THE 4,185 ARRESTED SINCE 01 DECEMBER 1976 HAVE BEEN FOREIGNERS, INDICATING A WILLINGNESS TO ENFORCE NARCOTICS LAWS AGAINST ITS OWN CITIZENS AS WELL AS FOREIGNERS. NOR ARE TOP-ECHELON TRAFFICKERS AS INVULNERABLE AS IN THE PAST. IN THE PAST TEN MONTHS, NINETEEN CLASS ONE AND CLASS TWO VIOLATORS HAVE BEEN ARRESTED, AMONG THEM MANUEL VILLAREAL VALDEZ, COSME LOPEZ BARON, MIGUEL INFANTE HERNANDEZ, AND JOHNNY GRANT. THERE IS NOW AN OUTSTANDING MEXICAN WARRANT FOR THE ARREST OF JAIME HERRERA, A PROMINENT MEMBER OF THE MEXICAN TRAFFICKING FAMILY THAT WAS PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED "UNTOUCHABLE".

11. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK: BY LAW AND TRADITION, THE FEDERAL JUDICIAL POLICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE HAS JURISDICTION OVER NARCOTICS OFFENSES AND IS SUPPORTED BY OTHER GOM ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THE ARMY, CUSTOMS, HIGHWAY PATROL, ETC. DURING THE ECHEVERRIA ADMINISTRATION, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE MADE AN INTENTIONAL ATTEMPT TO LIMIT THE PARTICIPATION OF OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES IN ORDER TO AVOID INTERAGENCY BICKERING. THE CURRENT ATTORNEY GENERAL, HOWEVER, TURNS WHENEVER POSSIBLE TO OTHER AGENCIES, PRINCIPALLY THE ARMY, FOR SUPPORT AND HAS BEEN KNOWN IS NOW THE RULE, WITH OPERATIONAL ORDERS SIGNED BY BOTH THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE AND THE ATTORNEY GENERAL. FIELD-LEVEL COOPERATION IS DEFINITELY ON THE UPSWING, PARTICULARLY IN THE CULIACAN AREA WHERE MILITARY COMMANDERS AND THE

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S COORDINATOR REGULARLY HOLD JOINT PLANNING SESSIONS. RECENTLY, FOR EXAMPLE, ATTORNEY GENERAL HELICOPTERS SPRAYED NEWLY-DISCOVERED POPPY FIELDS WHILE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MILITARY PERSONNEL SURROUNDED THE AREA TO PREVENT THE EXPORT OF OPIUM GUM EXTRATED IMMEDIATELY BEFORE THE SPRAYING OPERATION. IN TIME, WE EXPECT THE ATTORNEY GENERAL TO USE WHAT HE HAS ACCOMPLISHED WITH THE MILITARY AS A MODEL FOR COOPERATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES.

12. LEGAL FRAMEWORK: MEXICAN NARCOTICS LAWS ARE SUMMARIZED IN MEXICO 3726; WE KNOW OF NO PENDING CHANGES.

13. CONSTRAINTS: RECOMMEND USING PARAGRAPH ON CONSTRAINTS AS CONTAINED IN PARA 2 OF REFTEL.

14. PARTICIPATING U.S. AGENCIES: SUGGEST DEPARTMENT DRAW ON BRIEFING MATERIAL SENT TO S/NM IN JULY.

15. OTHER DONORS: WE KNOW OF NONE.

16. FUTURE OUTLOOK: WE EXPECT MEXICO WILL CONTINUE A VIGOROUS ANTI-NARCOTICS PROGRAM AS LONG AS THE USG IS PREPARED TO TRANSFER SIGNIFICANT RESOURCES FOR THIS PURPOSE AND, EQUALLY IMPORTANT, AS LONG AS IT PERCEIVES THAT THE USG WILL RESPOND FAVORABLY IN OTHER AREAS OF CONCERN TO MEXICO. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT GOM STATEMENTS ABOUT "FACING OUR RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY" WOULD BE TRANSLATED INTO AN EXTENSIVE ACTION PROGRAM ABSENT THE ABOVE TWO CONDITIONS. ASSUMING A CONTINUED USG COMMITMENT IN THE FORM OF NARCOTICS ASSISTANCE, WE EXPECT NEAR-TERM STRENGTHENING OF EXISTING ERADICATION OPERATIONS, THE GRADUAL DEVELOPMENT OF A WORKABLE NARCOTICS INTELLIGENCE SYSTEM, AND HALTING BUT REAL PROGRESS ON ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS AGAINST MAJOR TRAFFICKERS.

17. RECOMMENDED WASHINGTON ACTION: EMBASSY'S RECOMMENDATIONS WILL FOLLOW IN PROJECT-BY-PROJECT MESSAGES.
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Message Attributes

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